Internet resources in gay and lesbian studies

By Robert B. Marks Ridinger

For information on homosexual issues get “Out on the Net”

The last several years have witnessed the swift coalescence of gay and lesbian studies as both an academic subject and a popular research focus in virtually every discipline of the humanities and social sciences and in biology. Along with the sharp increase in monographs and journal articles has come a virtual explosion of Internet sites relating in some fashion to the life, culture, and issues of the gay and lesbian communities, both within the United States and worldwide. Many of these sites presuppose a degree of familiarity with subcultural jargon and abbreviations by using in their names slang terms, such as “queer,” which may not be the most obvious of choices to the general searcher.

The pattern of site creation is very different from many other subject fields, centering upon individual organizations ranging from blatantly political activist groups to professional caucuses (the latter having begun with ALA’s Gay and Lesbian Task Force in 1970). In an effort to cope with the sheer number of individual homepages carrying information relating to the gay and lesbian communities (and the speed with which new sites appear), this listing focuses on identifying those sites with the broadest potential audience and greatest value for reference work. General access points such as the Queer Resources Directory should be checked regularly for expanded and updated coverage of specific topics or information on newly founded groups.

Gateways
Given the diversity of the gay and lesbian communities, beginning searchers may wish to orient themselves by visiting some of the sites that attempt to provide gateways to a large number of links. Standard search engines such as Yahoo, Lycos, and Altavista may be of limited value for locating gay and lesbian information.

- Queer Resource Directory. One of the longest established gay directory sites and the model for others, with 16,494 files on every aspect of lesbian and gay culture. Access: http://www.qrd.org/qrd/.
- Infoqueer. A general site offering homepages of individuals and organizations by geographic area of the world, e-mail lists and newsgroups, campus groups, publications, and transgender and transsexual resources. A featured link to PopcornQ, the primary site for queer films, is also provided. Access: http://www.infoqueer.org/queer/qis/media.html.
- Canada Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Resources Directory. This offers links to all businesses and organizations that serve and support the homosexual and bisexual communities of Canada. Access: http://www.cgbhrd.com/.
- Gaynet. One of the very first Internet sites to emerge as a focus for discussion on gay- and lesbian-related subjects, and still a highly active forum for debate. Access: majordomo@queernet.org; “subscribe gaynet.”

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**Organizations**

• **National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.** Describing itself as "the frontline activist organization and national resource center for grassroots lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender organizations," this site also includes press releases, full text of selected publications, and profiles of the "Creating Change" conferences. Access: http://www.ngltf.org/.

• **Human Rights Campaign.** The United States' largest gay and lesbian lobbying organization, with emphases on comprehensive homosexual rights and AIDS. Access: www.hrcusa.org/.

• **Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund.** Founded in 1973, this is the largest legal organization working to secure civil rights for gays, lesbians, and persons with HIV via education, public policy work, and litigation. Access: http://www.gaysource.com/gs/ht/oct95/lambda.html.

• **Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation.** The only national gay and lesbian multimedia watchdog organization, dedicated to "promoting fair, accurate and inclusive representation as a means of challenging discrimination based on sexual orientation or identity." Site features include information on the creation of October as Lesbian and Gay History Month, the Freedom to Marry Project, and the GLAAD archives. Access: http://www.glaad.org/.


• **Gay and Lesbian Task Force Center and Collections (San Francisco Public Library).** A showpiece of the new San Francisco Public Library, this major research center's collections focus on both the national and worldwide gay and lesbian communities. Information on the extensive archival holdings of the center, including the personal papers of late politician Harvey Milk and journalist Randy Shilts, is provided. Access: http://nick.sfpl.lib.ca.us/glcenter/homeearly.htm.

**Business**

• **Lavender Pages.** The online business directory for the San Francisco Bay Area gay, lesbian, and bisexual communities. Access: http://www.lavenderpages.com/.

**Libraries and archives**


• **James C. Hormel Gay and Lesbian Center and Collections (San Francisco Public Library).** A showpiece of the new San Francisco Public Library, this major research center's collections focus on both the national and worldwide gay and lesbian communities. Information on the extensive archival holdings of the center, including the personal papers of late politician Harvey Milk and journalist Randy Shilts, is provided. Access: http://nick.sfpl.lib.ca.us/glcenter/homeearly.htm.

• **June L. Mazer Lesbian Collection (Los Angeles).** Originally known as the West Coast Lesbian Collection, this is the only archive in the western United States "dedicated exclusively to preserving lesbian history." Holdings reach...
back to 1895 and include the papers of veteran lesbian activists Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin. Access: http://www.lesbian.org/mazer/index.html.

- ONE Institute International Gay and Lesbian Archives (Los Angeles). Housed at the University of Southern California, this collection was formed in 1994 through the merger of the library of ONE (the oldest continuing homosexual activist group in the western hemisphere, founded in 1952) and the huge private collection of veteran activist Jim Kepner. Access: http://www.usc.edu/Library/oneigla/.

- Gerber/Hart Library and Archives (Chicago). Founded in 1981, this collection’s primary focus is on collecting and preserving the Midwest’s homosexual and bisexual history. Access: http://www.gerberhart.org/.

- Canadian Gay and Lesbian Archives (Toronto). Created in 1973 by the collective that produced the newspaper the Body Politic, the archives’ mission is “to collect and maintain information and materials relating to the gay and lesbian movement in Canada and elsewhere.” Access: http://www.web.net/archives/. Researchers investigating any aspect of Canadian way culture should also visit the site for the Archives Gaia du Quebec for the Franco-phone viewpoint on specific issues.


- Homodok (Amsterdam). One of the primary European archival collections on homosexual history, with holdings reaching back to 1870 and ranging from traditional sexology research to contemporary periodicals. Access: http://www.adamnet.nl/hldinfo.html.


- Lesbian Herstory Archives (New York City). By far the premier site for beginning any research on the lesbian community of the United States. The Herstory collection was begun in 1974 as the private library of lesbian feminists Joan Nestle and Deborah Edel. Holdings range from standard books and publications through unpublished diaries and clippings files to oral histories and videotapes. Access: http://www.intac.com/~kgs/llhef/index.html.

Gay and lesbian studies

- Programs in Gender and Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Studies at Universities in the USA and Canada. Extensive coverage of established and developing degree and nondegree programs and research resources. Access: http://www.duke.edu/web/jyounger/lbgprogs.html.


Minority gays and lesbians


Film

- PopcornQ. Based on the book The Ultimate Guide to Gay and Lesbian Video (Serpent’s Tail, 1996), this site offers a massive filmography based on titles screened at the San Francisco Gay and Lesbian Film Festival plus a se-

Journalism
- Queer Press International. A comprehensive site providing access to all aspects of gay and lesbian journalism from weekly summaries and organizational news to Rex Wockner's international monitoring of gay and lesbian events worldwide. A particularly useful feature is the list of those publications that have Web addresses. Access: http://cyberzine.org/html/GLAIDS/QPI/qpipage.html.

Politics
- Gay and Lesbian Politics: WWW and Internet Resources. This list is intended as a comprehensive resource on the roles, participation, attitudes, and behaviors of, and issues of concern to, gay men and lesbians in American politics. Access: http://ezinfo.ucs.indiana.edu/~sanderss/gaylespolguide.html.
- Queer Planet. An international list for gay, lesbian, and bisexual persons who want to work as community organizers. Access: majordomo@vector.casti.com. Subscribe: "queerplanet."

Domestic partnership
- Domestic Partnerships and Same Sex Marriages. The best site for beginning research into this controversial issue. Areas covered include the precise legal definition of family, sample domestic partner policies (and a list of those companies and institutions that have them), and the same-sex marriage case currently being heard in Hawaii. Access: http://www.cs.cmu.edu/afs/cs.cmu.edu/user/scotts/domestic-partners/mainpage.html.